

*about 13 Dec. 1962*

**MEMORANDUM FOR: The Honorable Robert S. McNamara  
Secretary of Defense**

1. At the close of the Executive Committee meeting on 4 December, I raised the question of courses of action we should follow if the Cuban SAM sites are made operational and a U-2 is shot down. This question has been considered, and the consensus seems to be that in such an eventuality we will be obliged to take out the SAM site or perhaps several SAM sites. There appeared no difference of opinion among those in attendance at the meeting on 4 December or previous meetings when I raised this question concerning the policy.

2. I feel there is a very strong possibility that we will soon face a situation where the Soviets will first warn us against further overflights, indicate that their SAM sites are in operation, and if we persist will destroy one or more U-2's. Action by us could, therefore, involve a military operation against announced Soviet controlled and operated bases and thus involve action against Soviet soldiers.

3. As we know from past experience, there is no guarantee that we will be able to positively state that the aircraft was shot down; and if the opposition elects to deny it, we would have no firm evidence on which to base a retaliatory action of the type suggested above. I am sure that in the circumstances described we will be required to submit positive proof that the aircraft was lost as a result of hostile action. If such proof is not readily available, I anticipate that the next question will pertain to the measures taken beforehand to insure, to the best of our ability, that such proof would be available when needed.

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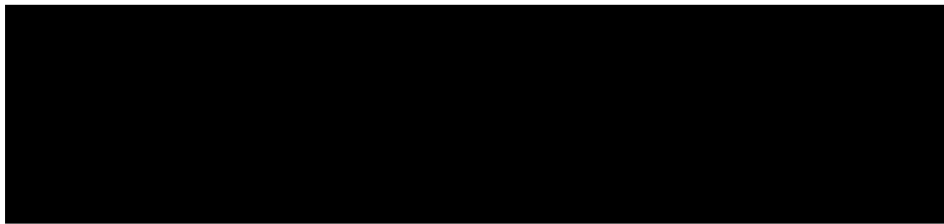
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4. In this regard, it is my understanding that there are several devices which might be brought to bear on this problem. Two of these which show considerable promise are:

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a. An RB-47 equipped with 100-inch telescope and motion picture camera. Such an aircraft could parallel the course of the U-2 and record its progress, particularly when passing within range of known SA-2 sites. The RB-47 would at all times be over international waters.



5. There may be additional assets presently available to the Department of Defense which could be of use, and I defer to your judgment in this regard. I am, however, deeply concerned that a contingency as described above may arise. A decision at that time, at best, will agonizingly be reached even with all the facts in hand. In the absence of this most essential intelligence, it will certainly be even more difficult. I would appreciate your views.

JOHN A. McCONE  
Director

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**Signature Recommended:**

Herbert Scoville, Jr.  
DD/R

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